

Trade in America 34.

L E T T E R S
TO A
N O B L E M A N .

[Price 2 s.]

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1780

LETTERS

TO A

NORLEMAN



[Price 2s.]



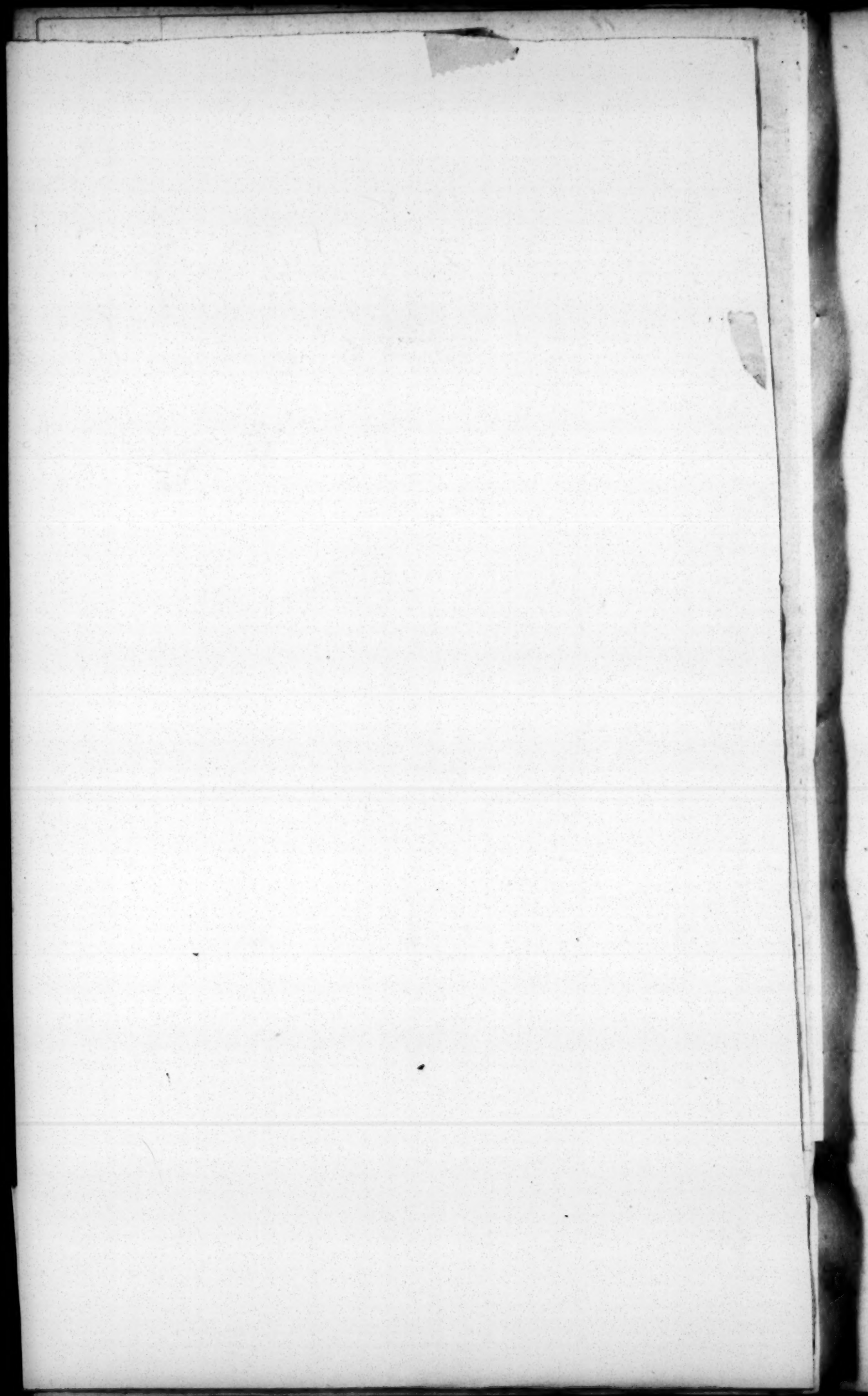
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LETTERS
TO A
NOBLEMAN;
ON THE
CONDUCT of the WAR
IN THE
MIDDLE COLONIES.
THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-Yard,
M DCC LXXX.

LETTERS

NOBLEMAN

WAR



COND

MIDDLE COLONIES

THE THIRD EDITION

LONDON

Printed for J. W. & J. G. Smith, 15, St. Paul's Church-Yard

1844

ADVERTISEMENT.

AN attempt has been made, in the H—e of C—ns, to establish the following propositions: That the revolted Colonies are naturally so strong as to be impracticable by war,—that their inhabitants are almost universally disaffected to the British Government,—and that the force sent over to suppress the rebellion has been, by no means, equal to the object.

This attempt, as soon as made, appeared to the Writer of the following Letters to involve several matters of the utmost consequence to the nation.—It was intended to conceal from the public eye the shameful misconduct of the American war,—to place to the account of Adm——n all the national misfortunes, which were founded only in that misconduct,—to prove that the rebellion cannot be suppressed by the force of this country;—and, of course, to demonstrate the disgraceful necessity of suffering two-thirds of the British territory to be dismembered by rebellion from the dominion of the state.

vi. ADVERTISEMENT.

To prove the reverse of these propositions ; to place the present national danger to the account of those to whose conduct alone it can be with justice imputed, and to expose to public view an attempt so inconsistent with the safety of the empire, is the design of publishing these Letters.—If the facts stated, and the arguments deduced from them, shall apply to those purposes, the end proposed by the Writer will be fully answered.

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

*Extracts of the Instructions to the Representatives
of the different Colonies in Congress
September 1774*

LETTER I.

MY LORD,

THE pleasure I take in complying with your wishes, will not suffer me to postpone the performance of a promise I made, when last I had the honour of conversing with your Lordship. If I remember right, it was to communicate my sentiments of the strength and practicability of the Middle Colonies where the late military operations have been carried on,—of the disposition of the people, in general, in the revolted Colonies,—and of the conduct of the war in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. These are matters which intimately concern the public welfare, and with which your Lordship as a senator, and the whole nation, who have expended many millions in that war, ought to be perfectly acquainted. Of these I shall therefore

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treat,

treat, in the order pointed out by your Lordship, without any other restraint than that which is imposed by candor and truth.

That part of the Middle Colonies which has been the scene of the late military operations, cannot, with the least propriety, in the military sense of the words, be called uncommonly strong, and much less impracticable. These operations have been chiefly confined between the mountains and the sea-coast southward of New York. In that part of America, the hills, when compared with those in this country, are by no means high or difficult of access. And there are few of them which do not afford an easy ascent either on one side or the other. Very unlike this country, where numerous hedges and high dykes form many bulwarks, for a time, proof even against cannon; there, neither hedges nor dykes are to be found. The fences are made of posts fixed in the ground, at ten feet distance, and in general with four or five cross rails, from nine to fifteen inches asunder. The country, which is thick settled and populous, every farmer living on his own plantation, not in villages, is interspersed with intermediate woods, and large plantations, or open fields. The wood consists of large tall trees, growing at different and considerable distances, without any underwood,

underwood, and are easily scoured with cannon or musquetry. This is a true and exact state of that part of the country of New Jersey and Pennsylvania where the war has been carried on; and from this description, it may be easily determined how far it can be deemed strong or impracticable in respect to military operations.

But, my Lord, experience is the best instructor; and if we attend to it, we shall certainly obtain every necessary information. In this country, we have lately seen two armies, one meditating its conquest, the other its defence. We have seen the British army penetrating into its heart, in a circuit of near two hundred miles, from Long Island, by the White Plains, to Trenton, and from the Elk Ferry to Philadelphia, in defiance of the utmost efforts of an enemy perfectly acquainted with every advantageous spot of ground; and we have seen that army taking, with ease and little loss, every strong post possessed by the enemy, who have always fled at its approach. Surely a country where such operations have been performed with so little difficulty, cannot be deemed very strong or impracticable.

But the strength or impracticability of this country is lost in idea, when we compare it with

the scene of action in the last American war. *That* was in a country of thick woods,—full of vast mountains, high precipices, and strong defiles; yet an *Amberst* and a *Wolfe* led the British troops through it to conquest and to glory, against the utmost efforts of French veterans. Though in strength it was equal to any of the countries in Europe, yet was it not so impracticable as to baffle the zeal of British Generals, who, unconnected with party, prized their own honour, and devoted their lives to the interest of their country and the glory of their Sovereign.

For my own part, I have no idea of any country being impracticable in respect to military operations. Nor, I believe, has any other person, who is acquainted with the history of war, or the conduct of great Commanders. Did not an Hannibal and a Cæsar cross the high mountains and strong defiles of the Alps? Have not Britons more than once victoriously traversed the strongest fortified countries of Germany, France, and Flanders? Is there a country in Europe which has not been pervaded by military skill and valour? No, my Lord, there is not. And I am confident I may adopt this proposition as true, that every country, however strong, will afford mutual and alternate advantages to
contending

contending armies, while superior skill, force, and exertion alone, can ensure victory and success. Should an inferior enemy in his retreat take possession of a strong post, which it would be too great a risque to attack, military policy and experience will tell us, that his provisions may be cut off,—his army besieged or starved into a surrender,—or the other parts of the country be reduced, while he remains inactive in his post; and after that, he can no longer subsist. How then can a country in any military sense be deemed impracticable? To the Ancients, or to Britons till lately, such a sentiment was unknown. It is not to be found in the annals of military history. A British soldier should blush at finding room for the thought in his heart, and much more at pronouncing it with his tongue. As the sentiment is as dangerous to military gallantry as it is novel, I trust that it has not made a deep impression on the minds of Britons. If it has, their honour will surely teach them to eradicate it. And were I to be arbitrary on the occasion, I would, for the sake of my country, erase the words *strong* and *impracticable* from every dictionary, lest it should be renewed to apologize for the military indolence and misconduct of men, who have sacrificed

to

to party and faction their own honour, the
glory of their Sovereign, and the dignity of the
nation.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most faithful

and obedient servant.

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

THERE is scarcely any thing more dangerous in the system of national defence, than misinformation respecting the state of the several parts and members of the Empire. It has a tendency to mislead the wisest and best ministers, to perplex the measures for the public safety, and often to throw them into inextricable confusion. I have therefore lamented, since my arrival in this kingdom, to find an opinion generally prevalent, and adopted by some in the great councils of the nation, *That the people in the revolted Colonies are almost unanimously disaffected to their Sovereign, and wish to be disunited in government from this country*; and that an attempt should be made to palm it on those councils as founded in truth. How it has happened, and from what motives an opinion so contrary to fact, and so injurious to the loyalty of by far the greatest part of the Colonists, has been propagated, is worthy of disquisition.

Some

Some Gentlemen, who left the Colonies in the beginning of the wild commotions, when the pulse of what is called Liberty beat high, and the people were deluded by a few ambitious and artful men, under pretence of obtaining by their opposition a redress of grievances, have erroneously, though innocently, adopted and propagated that opinion. Others who, from principles truly republican, wish to separate Great Britain and the Colonies, and have made use of this opinion as a reality, to support their proposal in Parliament to that end, have been the indefatigable promoters of it. And others, who were high in office in America, although they had before them daily demonstrations to the contrary, in order to justify the neglect and inhuman treatment which his Majesty's faithful subjects received at their hands, and to throw a veil over that misconduct which has unnecessarily wasted many millions for the nation, sacrificed its true interests, and lost its honour, were the inventors of it. Under the efforts of such a combination, we are not to be surprised at seeing, for a time, truth suppressed and falsehood triumphant.

I call this opinion false, because I mean to prove it so, from reason, and a variety of facts known to thousands. During the last war, there
was

was no part of his Majesty's dominions contained a greater proportion of faithful subjects than the Thirteen Colonies. The millions they granted to the Crown, the thousands sent into the field, the numbers of their privateers in the European and American seas, operating against the common enemy, are convincing proofs of this truth. The idea of disloyalty, at this time, scarcely existed in America; or, if it did, it was never expressed with impunity. How then can it happen, that a people so lately loyal, should so suddenly become universally disloyal, and firmly attached to republican Government, without any grievances or oppressions but those in anticipation? The tax imposed, and assigned as the cause of their disaffection, was truly a relief, not a burthen. Had it been a burthen, it was never felt, and had it been felt, it was of a most trivial nature. No fines, no imprisonments, no oppressions, had been experienced by the Colonists, that could have produced such an effect. It is a consequence that does not accord with the nature of the passions and affections of man. Reverence for a Sovereign from whom they have long received every proof of paternal regard and protection, and attachment to a Government under which they have been the happiest people on the globe, with a predilection for its laws, religion, man-

niers, and customs, - founded in reason, and riveted by habit and enjoyment, from infancy to manhood, and even to old age, are not to be eradicated by such trivial causes. They become second nature, and hard to be expelled. If we search the whole history of human events, we shall not meet with an example of such a sudden change, from the most perfect loyalty to universal disaffection. On the contrary, in every instance where national attachment has been generally effaced, it has been effected by slow degrees, and a long continuance of oppression, not in prospect, but in actual existence. Here we can conceive, that national attachment and affection, although fixed by habit, may give way at length to the superior influence and dictates of the first and most powerful principle in human nature, self-preservation; but without such a cause, it cannot be accounted for by reason, or by any antecedent example in the history of mankind.

Although the arguments I have offered, and the principles I have stated, are sufficient to discredit the opinion I am opposing, I will further, in order to elucidate the truth, enquire whether those principles will apply to the conduct of the Americans. Before the last war, there were men in America, as in all other countries,

countries, of considerable abilities, and little fortune,—restless and ambitious spirits,—educated in republican principles, and of course destitute of those habits and attachments which would have formed and fixed their loyalty; but their number was small. These men spoke and wrote of the independence of America (*a*), as an event which might happen in future, but did not venture to express a wish that it might, or could be, in their time. When the Stamp-act took place, they were the first to incite the people to opposition. The plausibility of the arguments against the right of Parliament to tax them, prevailed on many to think those arguments reasonable, and to wish for a repeal; but these restless and unprincipled men, to prepare the minds of the people for their yet latent scheme of independence, incited mobs, consisting of a few abandoned men in two or three of the American ports, much against the tempers of the people at large, to destroy the stamped paper. The people, in general, disapproved

(*a*) “ The Independent Reflector”—“ The Independent Whig”—and other fugitive pieces, published at New York and Boston, were evidently calculated to lessen the attachment of the people to a mixed monarchy, to disseminate the principles of Republican Government, and to inculcate in the minds of the people an idea, that the Colonies would soon be a great independent Empire.

of this violent and seditious mode of opposition to a British statute, and pursued a different measure, equally decent and dutiful. They petitioned their constitutional Representatives, and these petitioned Parliament for a repeal of that Act, declaring, that they were ready to grant their proportions of aids whenever required by the Crown. You know, my Lord, the success these petitions produced. I can affirm, that on this occasion, very little, if any, change was wrought in the loyalty of the Colonists, although great pains were not wanting to effect it.

When the Tea-act passed, the same men, determined to lose no opportunity of promoting their favourite scheme of independence, stirred up the rabble in several of the sea-ports, headed by the smuggling merchants, whose interest alone was affected by the act, to seize the Tea, and in one of the Colonies to destroy it. But in this the people at large took no part.

In consequence of the illegal and unjustifiable destruction of the Tea in Boston, the Act for stopping up that port was passed; this afforded another opportunity for the exercise of violent spirits. Every art was used to draw the people of that town into violent measures. The country was called upon to join them, but in vain; far

from any views of independence, the people honestly declared, that a violent act of injustice had been committed, and that reparation ought to be made.

These daring spirits having, however, by various arts and incessant exertions, procured, in most of the Colonies, a party of men immediately interested in the repeal of the Tea-act, of the most restless dispositions,—of bankrupt fortunes, and dishonest principles, proposed a general Congress, under pretence of uniting in *decent and proper measures*, for obtaining a repeal of these statutes. But they carefully concealed their principal design of separating the two countries, and establishing independent Governments, because they knew the minds and affections of the people, and even of some of those who were zealous opposers of the acts, were too firmly attached to the British Government to endure the thought; and they had not as yet obtained a power sufficient to enforce the measure.

This proposal of a Congress was by no means generally approved by the people. They thought, that their respective Assemblies were most proper to petition, and to obtain a redress of their grievances; they knew, that the Assemblies were their legal Representatives, that the
appoint-

appointment of a Congress would be by themselves a violation of those rights which they complained of in others; and they were apprehensive, that persons illegally appointed, might not pursue reasonable and legal measures; or if they did, that they would not be so successful in the event, as if proposed and pursued under a constitutional authority. For these reasons they relied on their Assemblies. But, while the great bulk of the people acted on such rational and loyal principles, the violent few proceeded to chuse their Committees and Conventions, and these to chuse their Delegates in Congress. Under this circumstance, it was an easy task for the independent faction, to prevail on a few restless and weak men to appoint many of their own number. However zealous the electors might be in opposing the Statutes of which they wished for a repeal, yet there were many among them whose opposition was meant to extend no further; and therefore we find, that the instructions given to the Delegates in Congress were so far from authorising them to promote the independence of the Colonies, or to take up arms, that all of them, either expressly, or by the fullest implication, prohibited it. I have inclosed, for your Lordship's perusal, extracts of those instructions (*b*), from which it will clearly

(*b*) See the extracts in the Appendix.

appear,

appear, that the Congress were not authorised to pursue any measures, except those that were *legal*, that perfectly corresponded with their *allegiance to their Sovereign*, and that tended to *unite, and not to separate* the two countries. Your Lordship will perceive, on comparing these instructions with the proceedings of Congress, particularly in their approbation of the Suffolk resolves, inciting the people to arms, their resolve to make reprisals, and their seditious letters to the people of England, Ireland, and Canada, that the Delegates violated their trust, acted in every measure which tended to violence and sedition, without authority, and contrary to the directions of those who appointed them; and that the people in general were so far from intending the least deviation from their loyalty, that all they sought for was a redress of what they thought grievances, by “ prudent and legal measures, and a more perfect union of the two countries upon constitutional principles.”

While the people, who had given such proofs of their loyalty in the last war, continued to act on this ground, although some of them were seduced by false pretences into measures of violence, reason as well as charity forbids the conclusion that even these must be disaffected. Seditious oppositions

fitions to the measures of Government, on the same motives, have been common in every country. It has ever been an easy task for a few violent and discontented spirits to delude, for a time, a part of the ignorant vulgar into all the measures of treason, without their having a spark of sedition in their hearts. We cannot therefore justly form our judgments on the complexion of the people in general, from a view of their conduct before the Declaration of Independence. The treasonable designs of their seducers had been artfully concealed under a variety of disguises, falsehoods, and frauds. This threw off the veil, and cleared the sight of the deluded. Reason and Conscience, being no longer blindfold, now deserted the measures of sedition, and separated the Loyalist from the Traitor. The people were obliged to take a decisive line of conduct; and many of those who had been zealous in the measures of opposition, while they rested on the former ground, now forsook them.

It may be here asked, since the people in general were so averse to the appointment and measures of the Congress, why did they not oppose them? The fact is, that they did it both affirmatively and negatively. They opposed them by a multitude of publications in newspapers

papers and pamphlets, written with a spirit which discovered the utmost firmness, and an inviolable attachment to Government ; and by not countenancing the measures by their attendance at the elections.—They had no other legal means in their power, and they had too much respect for the laws to do it illegally. They could not do more to prevent the warm and factious part of the community from attending when and where they thought proper, and from acting as they pleased ; because they had no legal controul over them. For this they looked up to the executive powers of Government ; and these, in almost every colony, were asleep.—Not a single exertion was made to suppress the unlawful assemblies, or to crush the rising spirit of sedition, until it was too late.—Riotous mobs, stirred up by the violent faction, patrolled the streets of every city and town, committing the most daring outrages on the persons and properties of loyal citizens, who were averse to their measures, without the least essay on the part of Government to suppress them ; and in some colonies the Officers of Government themselves were either the leaders of the faction, or secretly gave it their support ; while, in all, such was their pusillanimous and spiritless conduct, that the Committees, Conventions, and Congress were suffered gradually to sap the foundations of their

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established

established constitutions, to throw them into confusion, and to prevail on a small part of the people to take up arms (c).

Hitherto the Independents had deceived the people with repeated asseverations of their utter abhorrence of independence, and of their intentions only to obtain a redress of grievances. This appears evident, from all their petitions to the Crown, many of their resolves, letters, and other proceedings, down to the time of their Declaration of Independence.—But having now obtained a military force to support them, they thought their scheme ripe for execution, and therefore openly avowed the design which they had so industriously concealed; because they knew, from the whole tenor of the people's conduct, they held it in the greatest detestation. However, although the Congress were composed of the most warm and violent men in the Colonies, and had an army at this time to support their measures, the Independent Faction did

(c) In the Proprietary Colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania, it was remarkable that many of the Officers of Government, and in the latter, at least five out of six of the Magistrates, were the promoters of the rebellion,—were Members of the Committees, Conventions, and the General Congress;—were Officers superintending military appointments, and procuring military stores,—and the most active and zealous supporters of military opposition.

not

not find it an easy task to carry their vote of Independence against the sense of the people. They laboured the question near a month, and when it was called for, the Colonies were divided six against six. The Delegates of Pennsylvania being also divided, the question remained undetermined until the next day, when the debate was renewed, and a single Member changing his opinion, gave the casting vote. Having obtained this vote in their favour, the Independent Faction industriously set about establishing themselves in their power, by instituting their new States. But when they had done this under the support of military force, they did not think it safe, against the attempts of a great majority of the people, who detested their design, and remained firmly attached to the British Government; therefore, effectually to prevent all future opposition, they suppressed the liberty of the press, disarmed every person whom they thought disaffected to their measures, and passed a number of laws to compel the people to abjure their allegiance to their Sovereign, and take an oath to their own States—to attaint the lives and confiscate the estates of every person acting in opposition to their design;—making it highly penal to speak or write against their proceedings, and declaring it high treason to adhere to, aid, or assist the British crown;—all which were car-

ried into execution with the greatest inhumanity. Under these laws, several were imprisoned, many banished, and not a few suffered death; on the whole, more than in any civil war or revolution of Government hitherto known.

The Congress could not expect by these measures to work a change in the minds of the people, or to draw them from their former loyalty to an adherence to these New States.—They were too well acquainted with the human mind not to know, that opinions formed by long continued habits, and beneficial enjoyments, were not easily removed; and that violence and cruelty rather tended to fix, than alter, the principles of men. The extent of their views was to subdue the spirits of the people, and deter them from an open and avowed opposition. In this they, in some degree, succeeded. The people robbed of their arms, deprived of the liberty of writing or speaking their sentiments, and labouring under every mischief that tyranny could devise or inhumanity inflict, saw their own safety involved in an involuntary acquiescence, until the power of their Sovereign should enable them to act a more decisive part. But at the same time they manifested by their conduct, that they were determined not to assist in supporting or countenancing, more than they could help, those measures

fures which they disapproved, and that Government which they wished to destroy. Men of property and incorrupt principles, for this reason, have in all the States very generally withstood solicitations to accept of offices under their authority, leaving them to be filled by the most unprincipled and abandoned among the people. And from the same motive have they declined, from the beginning, to attend, or be in any wise concerned in the elections of Committees, Conventions, Congresses, or any of the Members of the New States.—This has been so generally the fact, that we have seen, ever since the rebellion began, these public bodies in all the States appointed by less than one-tenth part of the people. In one by less than one-fortieth, in another by one hundred and fiftieth part, and in another, by one person only, where there were a thousand (*d*).

Such was the opposition given by the loyal part of the people to the measures of sedition.

(*d*) In Pennsylvania, where there are upwards of 30,000 voters, all the Members of the New State were chosen for the year 1778 by less than 200.—In New-York, at a contested election for the same year, when two persons contended for the office of Governor, they were not able to prevail on more than 1000 voters to attend, although all the people capable of voting in that large province had a right to vote. In King's County, Mr. Boerum was chosen by one person only, although that district contained near 1000 voters.

What other opposition could they give? The Officers of Government were the promoters of that rebellion which it was their duty to suppress. —Instead of calling on the people to assist in opposing it, they were daily inciting them to take in it an active part. The loyalists were disarmed,—and their arms given to rebels.—And had they retained their arms, they had no commission under the Crown to make use of them in favour of Government. And without such authority, they knew that, by law, whoever should take up arms, would be guilty of high-treason, and every homicide would amount to the crime of murder.

But these are not all the proofs that may be adduced in favour of the unshaken fidelity of the people in general of the revolted Colonies. We have seen them, wherever the British army have marched, receiving the troops with every mark of gladness, and particularly in Philadelphia, with such acclamations of joy in every street, that a British general, whose mind had been impressed with different ideas, could not refrain crying out, “ Surely this must be more than show.” We have seen them, during the space of near nine months, while the British army remained in Philadelphia, daily supplying, at the risque of their lives, that army, the British
navy,

navy, and the inhabitants, consisting of not less than fifty thousand souls, with every kind of provisions from the country of which the rebel army had the complete possession. We have seen them, at the same time, refusing those supplies to the rebel General, breaking their carriages, concealing their horses, disobeying his proclamations, and suffering their grain to be taken from them without price, rather than be the instruments of aiding the enemies of their Sovereign. We have seen them coming from all quarters of the Middle Colonies into the British lines, to give intelligence of the state of the enemy, and of the good dispositions of the people towards Government. We have seen many thousands flying over to the British troops for protection, or concealing themselves in distant provinces where they were unknown, or taking refuge even amongst the savages, to avoid entering into the war against their fellow-subjects in this country, and at the same time thousands of them in arms as *volunteers*, serving in their behalf without receiving pay or clothing. We have seen, from the beginning of independence to this day, a great majority of the Colonists, notwithstanding the excessive penalty of treble taxes, disfranchisements, and the loss of that liberty which the mind of man holds more valuable than wealth, remain nonjurors to the states, and
with

with a perseverance which does honour to human nature, yet adhere to their former allegiance. We have seen the Colonies in the last war, when the numbers of their people were one third less than they are at present, with cheerfulness, on the requisition of the Crown, raising and sending into the field 25,000 regular troops, and yet, that the Congress and new States, with innumerable falsehoods and frauds to seduce, excessive bounties to allure, and the several laws to compel (*e*), have not been able to raise a regular army of more than half that number. We have, at the same time also, seen those people, notwithstanding the small compass of the British lines, flocking over to the Provincial corps, and filling up their numbers equal to the

(*e*) Sir William Howe's letter of the 3d of September 1776. "The inhabitants of Long Island, many of whom *had been forced into the Rebellion*, have all submitted, and are ready to take the oaths of allegiance." Of the 12th of February 1777. "They (the Rebel states) conscious that their whole stake depends upon the success of the next campaign, use *every compulsory means* to those who do not enter *voluntarily* into their service." And his letter of the 5th of March, 1778. "Great struggles are making throughout the provinces, to assemble a numerous army in the spring, and the most oppressive and arbitrary means exercised to draw the people to the field, *who, almost generally, shew extreme backwardness* to their service, and in some instances, have *forcibly resisted* the tyranny of their rulers."

rebel

rebel army, and fitting out upwards of 100 privateers, which are daily operating against the common enemy. We have seen, that *three-fourths* of the rebel army have been generally composed of English, Scotch, and Irish, while scarcely the small proportion of one-fourth are Americans, notwithstanding the severe and arbitrary laws to force them into the service. We have seen them in the Colonies of North Carolina, Maryland, the Delaware counties, New Jersey, and New York, patiently suffering, for a time, under their oppressions, and at length, in large bodies, with a few concealed arms, pitchforks, and clubs, indiscreetly rising in favour of Government. We have seen whole counties refusing to be drafted, and the troops of others when drafted, in a body of five hundred men, with arms in their hands, refuse to join the Rebel army against their Sovereign, and another body of the same number when joined, dismissed by the Rebel Commander, because too much attached to the British Government (*f*). And we have seen many thousands suffering banishments, confiscations, proscriptions, and death itself, for active services done by them for Government, and because they could not abjure the

(*f*) These facts happened in September 1777, when Washington lay in Pennsylvania.

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best

best of Sovereigns. Such are the unparalleled sufferings, virtue and fidelity of those unhappy people, whose untainted loyalty has been shamefully traduced in the wild politics of a faction.

I will not, my Lord, trouble you with more facts, though many remain to be told; I trust those I have mentioned are sufficient to prove, that by far the greater part of the people have withstood every species of seduction and force to draw them from their allegiance to their Sovereign. That a number of the Colonists, incautious and blindfolded, fell into the snares of a few ambitious and interested men, is a truth; but it is also true, that many of that number, since the declaration of independence, have changed their minds on rational principles. They have, from distressing experience, found themselves deceived by their leaders. They were told, that they were oppressed by Great Britain, which they believed without feeling the oppression. And they were taught to believe, that they would extricate themselves from it by a military opposition, and by no other means. They reasoned at this time only from what they were told; but since their independence, they have melancholy cause to reason from their feelings. All that they now hear, see, or feel,
convinces

convinces them that they knew no oppression then, and that by their own delusion they are now become slaves to arbitrary power. They are daily comparing their former happiness with their present misery and distress. When they have retrospect to their former condition, they recollect that their lands were fully cultivated, their mechanic arts flourished, their labourers were numerous, their harvests were plentiful, their commerce was extensive, their governments mild and free, their laws reasonable and just, their persons and properties safe from insult or oppression, their religion secured, their country and its commerce protected by the fleets and armies of Great Britain, their taxes light and trifling beyond all parallel, and that they and their forefathers had enjoyed greater happiness than any people on earth.

Such are the pleasing and endearing scenes which the late state of America is daily recalling to the memories of the deluded people in that country, while every sense capable of pleasure or pain is constantly upbraiding them with their folly, and proclaiming these melancholy truths: That their labourers, mechanics, and artists have been dragged into the field of battle, where, or in military hospitals, they have miserably perished; that their shipping are de-

stroyed, their commerce ruined,—their governments arbitrary, under a semblance of freedom,—their laws cruel and sanguinary,—their persons, properties, and lives in continual jeopardy,—their religion in danger from the unrelenting power of Popish superstition,—their taxes exceeding the value of their property, and impossible to be sustained,—and not one spark of that felicity they so lately enjoyed, now left in their possession.

If we look into human nature, its passions and affections, and particularly into the principles of self-interest and preservation, which we know govern its opinions and conduct, can we hesitate a moment to conclude, that so great an alteration in the circumstances of men, from a state of felicity to that of misery, must work a change in the dispositions of many of the disaffected? It seems impossible. However, let the conclusions drawn from those premises be what they may, the fact perfectly coincides with the rational conclusion, inasmuch that I am convinced, from what I have seen and know of the dispositions of the people in that country, if the terror was taken off their minds, if the new states were dissolved, the rebel force disbanded, the British troops withdrawn, and the people of course left to their free and unbiassed suffrages,
that

that *nine* persons out of *ten* in the whole revolted Colonies would vote for a constitutional union with, and dependence on, the British State; and I am also confident, that this union and dependence might be easily secured on those principles of policy which ever did, and alone can preserve the union of the several members of the Empire.

Your Lordship, I suspect, will here ask, what then is to be done in the present situation of affairs, to bring the people of America back to their allegiance to the Crown? Are we to treat with the Congress, or the New States? By no means, my Lord; this would be totally inconsistent with those just and indefeasible claims of right to the territory and sovereignty of the country, which has been constantly maintained, with the safety of a multitude of loyal subjects, who with unparalleled fidelity, and fortitude of mind, have sacrificed to their principles all that men can forfeit, and with that humanity and dignity for which the British State has ever been distinguished among nations. There is no one motive, founded in reason, which can lead to such a treaty. The Congress, or the New States, as has been shewn, are not the Representatives of one-tenth part of the community, and consequently have no authority to treat; so

far from it, that they are, in reality, the usurpers of a despotic power over nine-tenths of the people, which the honor of Government is bound to destroy. Under these circumstances, no terms, however ratified by the Congress or New States, could create any real obligation on the people. They would be at liberty to depart from them at pleasure. But there is not the least reason to believe that they would ever accede to any terms which will not lead to a separation of the two Countries; to which I may add, there is not the least apparent necessity for such a measure. An union between the two Countries must and may be easily settled with different persons, and upon different principles from those upon which Congress will ever settle them.

The persons proper to be treated with, if I may use the expression where subjects are concerned, are the true Representatives of the people at large in the several Colonies. A compact of union made with them, we may reasonably expect will be founded in the mutual interests of both Countries, because their interests are truly the same. Their assent will make it binding, and therefore permanent. But in order to enable the people to choose their Representatives, the force which prevents it

it must be removed. This, I know, has been thought an arduous task; but the sentiment is founded in mistake, arising from a misrepresentation of the rebel force, and the practicability of reducing the rebellion. A Clinton, whose loyalty to his Sovereign, and attachment to his country, are untainted, and whose military abilities remain undisputed, is in the field. He will reverse the policy and conduct of his predecessor, and with much less force remove that tyranny which has hitherto separated the loyal part of the people from their Sovereign. This done, there is no one who is acquainted with the dispositions of the people in general of the revolted Colonies, who can hesitate to believe that they will with cheerfulness accept of, and submit to, any reasonable terms of accommodation: And the more those terms adhere to the principles of the British Constitution; the more they accord with that policy which unites and cements the members of a State in perpetual harmony with each other; the more they tend to diffuse the same measure of power and the same degree of liberty throughout the empire, and to make them one people, the more zealously will they be embraced. Every deviation from those great principles of policy will in a proportionate degree be accepted with reluctance, and be productive of future mischiefs.

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What these terms ought to be, it would be presumptuous in me to determine; I will therefore only add, that the time for proposing them should be as soon as the usurped authority of the New States is suppressed. In every Colony where this is done, a representation of the people should be called, and the terms immediately proposed. At this time faction will be suppressed, and a delegation formed, of the most reasonable and loyal part of the Colony. That lawless ambition which first sowed the seeds of Independence, and has since sustained the rebellion, will hide its head, nor dare to enter the public council. Reason will take place, and the great objects of discussion will rest in the establishment of that measure of power and liberty, which will perpetuate to the latest period of time an union and political harmony between the two Countries.

I am, my Lord, &c.

L E T T E R I I I .

M Y L O R D ,

IN order to treat of the conduct of the war in the Middle Colonies, in which is involved a much agitated question, whether the force was adequate to the object, we must begin with a view of that force—of the force in opposition, and of the situation of the revolted Colonies at the time. A genuine state of the facts involved in these subjects will throw great light upon the question, and prepare the mind for judging with candour on subsequent facts and remarks.

The foot and cavalry, sent over to America, amounted to 52,815.—Of that number 40,874 were under the command of Sir William Howe (g).—So great a force, with all, and more than its necessary appointments, prepared in so short a time, never before crossed the Atlantic, or any other ocean. We may therefore safely pronounce it the result of superior wisdom and unparalleled exertion. Exertion so “decisive and masterly,” and so far beyond what the Commander himself asked for, or expected, that he could not avoid “expressing his amazement (b).”

When

(g) Major General Robertson’s Evidence before the House of Commons, MS. p. 34.

(b) In his Letter, dated 8th of June 1776, Sir William Howe is so far from complaining that the force sent over was inadequate to its object, that he decisively declares to the

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When Sir W. Howe arrived at Staten Island, the resolutions of Congress, recommending independence to the Colonies, had just passed.—The powers of the old Governments were not entirely destroyed, nor the new States established.—The Independents themselves were divided into factions respecting the forms of Government they meant to institute. All their affairs were embarrassed, and in the greatest confusion. The rebel force which had been seduced into arms, under a pretence of obtaining a redress of grievances, did not amount to 18,000 men, militia included.

Having thus before us the number of troops of both parties, it is necessary, to a further elucidation of the truth, to take a comparative view of the real force of each in the military balance (*i*).

The British army was commanded by able and experienced officers, the rebel by men destitute of military skill or experience; and, for the most part, taken from mechanic arts or the plough.—The first were possessed of the best appointments.—“ I cannot take my leave of your Lordship, without expressing my *utter amazement* at the *decisive* and *masterly* strokes for carrying such extensive plans *into immediate execution*, as have been effected since your Lordship has assumed the conducting of this war, which is already most happily experienced, by those who have the honour of serving here under *your auspices*.”

(*i*) See a comparative view of the apparent force of each in the Appendix.

ments,

ments, and of more than they could use, and the other of the worst, and less than they wanted.—The one were attended by the ablest surgeons and physicians, healthy and high-spirited,—the other were neglected in their health, clothing, and pay; were sickly, and constantly murmuring and dissatisfied;—and the one were veteran troops, carrying victory and conquest wheresoever they were led; the other were new raised and undisciplined, a panic-struck and defeated enemy whenever attacked; such is the true comparative difference between the force sent to suppress, and that which supported the rebellion.

Another matter, which has too long been a question with the Public, ought to be cleared up—I mean, whether the General commanding the British troops has been confined by peremptory instructions, which weakened his operations, and obstructed the great design of the war. It is sufficient on this head to observe, that the General has not availed himself in his vindication of so material a defence; and the letters of the American Secretaries of State prove that he was left to his own judgment in forming and executing his plans in every instance, except one (*k*), which he unfortunately neglect-

(*k*) These instructions were, to support the Northern Army, and to make a diversion in its favour on the New-England Coasts. Lord George Germaine's Letter, 3d March, 1777.

ed, and by that neglect sacrificed a British army, and involved his country in a degree of disgrace it never before had experienced.

Upon this state of the general and most material facts, your Lordship will naturally ask a question to which you will expect a general answer. How then, since the British Commander had a force so much superior to his enemy, has it happened that the rebellion has not been long ago suppressed? The cause, my Lord, however enveloped in misrepresentation on this side of the Atlantic, is no secret in America.—It has been long lamented there, by thousands of his Majesty's faithful subjects, while the rebels have repeatedly announced it in their publications with triumphant insolence and ridicule—Friends and foes unite in declaring that it has been owing to want of wisdom in the plans, and of vigour and exertion in the execution.

To support this truth, so universally adopted in America, before I descend to particular operations, I will first treat of the general conduct of the war.—The Commander in Chief never began his operations until the middle of June. A part of that month, and the whole of April and May, when the season is moderate, and most proper for action, and the roads are good,
were

were wantonly wasted ; while a variety of the most cogent motives pointed to an early and vigorous campaign. In these months, the rebel army was always reduced to its weakest state. Its numbers were diminished by incessant and excessive fatigue, sickness, and desertion (*l*) ; and those who remained were naked, half starved, and destitute of supplies. It was in the months of April and May that recruits for the rebel army were chiefly procured, who never could join it before the month of June. And it was apparent, in every year, that the operations of the British army, as soon as begun, however indolent, never failed to sink the spirits of the rebellious to such a degree, as totally to obstruct the recruiting service. In vain did these inviting, these importunate circumstances, against which nothing ought to have prevailed but some momentous and insuperable difficulty, press the General to take the field. He preferred the pleasures of indolence and dissipation, to a discharge of his duty to his country ; foolishly resting, for his vindication, upon an apology as groundless as it was unmilitary. His army could not move, as is alleged, “ until the green forage was to be found on the ground.” Had this been fact, the green

(*l*) Sir W. H——e's Letter, 5th March, 1778.

forage

forage is always sufficiently grown, in the middle of May. But waving this argument, he knew that dry forage was much more hearty food for his horses than green. That he might have carried the same forage with them for a time, which sustained them in their quarters. That the country was full of dry forage of every kind; and that he had ever obtained it when he stood in need of it, whether in the field or in his quarters (*m*), and consequently that he could not fail of procuring it in any month in the year.

The General affected to believe, that the people of that country were generally in rebellion.—I say he affected, because he could not really believe it.—He had too many daily proofs of the contrary.—He saw Gentlemen of influence and fortune constantly coming over to him in his quarters, or in the field, and tendering their services.—He saw repeated attempts made by bodies of men to form themselves in arms, and to assist him in suppressing the rebellion.—He saw many of the inhabitants fined, imprisoned, and suffering death it-

(*m*) Sir W. H.—'s Letter, 17th Jan. 1778. Lord Cornwallis procures, "from the country, forage sufficient for the
"winter consumption."

self on account of their loyalty (*n*).—He saw many thousands refusing to take the oaths of allegiance to the New States, or to abjure their Sovereign.—And yet, contrary to these proofs, he, with many of his General Officers, affected to believe then, and have since declared, that the people of that country were almost unanimously disaffected to the Crown. Under this pretence, we have seen him decline to intrust the faithful and loyal subjects with arms, or to make use of the well-affected force in the Colonies to assist him in reducing, or in defending after reduced, either cities or provinces.

When he passed through New Jersey, and drove the panic-struck rebel force out of that country, no step was taken to embody and arm the friends of Government, who were ready and anxious to be employed in disarming the

(*n*) Sir William Howe's letters prove the truths I have endeavoured to support.—In that dated 8th June, 1776, he says, he landed his troops “to the great joy of a most *faithful and loyal people*.—That he has great reason to expect a “*numerous body* of the inhabitants to join the army from the “provinces of New-York, the Jerseys, and Connecticut; “who, in this time of universal oppression, only wait for “opportunities to give proofs of their *loyalty and zeal for* “*Government*.”—Letter 20th December, 1776—“The “chain of cantonments is rather too extensive, but I was “induced to occupy Burlington to cover the county of “Monmouth, *in which there are many loyal inhabitants*.”

disaffected,

disaffected, in restoring the province to his Majesty's peace, and in defending it when the army should proceed in its other necessary operations. In Philadelphia, where a militia might have been formed sufficient, with the assistance of 1000 regulars, and a few vessels of war, to have defended it against any force which could have been brought against it, while the British army was operating against the main body of the rebel army, there was the same unpardonable omission, although he remained in that city near nine months.

Surely, my Lord, you will think a conduct like this was contrary to sound policy; nay, to the plain dictates of common-sense. A small share of knowledge of that policy, which every successful Conqueror has ever pursued, would have taught the British Commander, that no extensive country was ever yet reduced and retained without the assistance of its inhabitants; and that it ever has been the practice of all great men, when they have entered an extended territory with a view of conquest, to gain a knowledge of the prejudices, resentments, and attachments of the people, to take advantage of them, and to apply them to the object they meant to obtain. And in order to effect this, if they found any parties disaffected to the power in opposition,

position, it was their obvious policy and practice to embrace them with cordiality and confidence, and to attach them to their interest by every means which reason and experience could suggest. But his conduct was a perfect contrast to this practice. He entered a country in length 1500, and in breadth 300 miles. He found it divided into two parties,—one, and by far the major part of the inhabitants, were well affected to his measures, and many were desirous to assist in his operations. Did he take advantage of these important circumstances? Did he, with cordiality and confidence, embrace the well affected to Government? Did he take one step which tended to reconcile the people to his Majesty's interest and government, or to bring them back to their former allegiance, although he had a commission and instructions for that purpose? No, my Lord; but on the contrary, the advantages which might have been derived from their parties, and attachments to Great Britain, were entirely neglected; and although he saw the people, in different parts of the country, making every effort in their power to assist him; yet we find in all his Proclamations, an injunction on them to remain peaceably in their habitations, without the least invitation to take up arms in behalf of the Crown, or the smallest intimation that their assistance would

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accord

accord with his wishes. An injunction which amounted, in effect, to a prohibition, and rendered it dangerous, if not unlawful, for them to act otherwise, because a strict obedience to it was the only condition upon which he promised them his Majesty's protection. Instead of those measures which humanity and reason pointed out to win over his Majesty's deluded subjects to their duty, others, which could not fail to alienate their minds from his royal person and Government, were pursued, or suffered to be pursued. A Proclamation was indeed issued in his Majesty's name, promising protection to all the inhabitants who should come in and take the oaths of allegiance. Thousands came in wherever the army marched, and took the oath, but the Royal faith, pledged for their safety, was shamefully violated. The unhappy people, instead of receiving the protection promised, were plundered by the soldiery. Their wives and daughters were violently polluted by the lustful brutality of the lowest of mankind; and friends and foes indiscriminately met with the same barbarian treatment.

If the British General was indolent and neglectful in putting a stop to these cruelties, the Rebel Commander and the New States were not so in converting them to their own benefit. Every possible advantage was

made of these enormities (o). Affidavits were taken of the plunder, and of every rape. They were published in all their news-papers, to irritate and enrage the people against his Majesty and the British nation. The British soldiers were represented as a race of men more inhuman than savages. By these means, the minds of many were turned against the British Government, and many in desperation joined the rebel army. The force of the rebels was increased, the British weakened, and the humanity and glory of Britons received a disgraceful tarnish, which time can never efface.

However great these mischiefs might be in strengthening the force of the rebellion, they did not end here. The suffering of the soldiers to plunder, and commit other outrages, was a dangerous relaxation of discipline. It rendered them avaricious, neglectful of their duty, and disobedient to command. To this cause only the loss of Trentown, and all that train of heavy misfortunes which attended it, can be imputed; because, it is a fact, that Colonel Raille, al-

(o) See the affidavits proving the indiscriminate and wanton plunder committed by the soldiery in the provinces of New York and New Jersey, with a number of rapes perpetrated on the wives and daughters of the inhabitants, in the Pennsylvania Evening Post of the 24th and 29th of April—1st, 3d, and 10th of May 1777.

though he had sufficient notice of the enemy's approach, could not form his men, who, more attentive to the safety of their plunder than their duty, and engaged in putting horses to and loading their waggons, became deaf to all orders. In this state they were surrounded and taken.

If this conduct in the British Commander was contrary to good policy, the plans of his operations were equally injudicious. No good reason, nor even a plausible one, can be assigned for his going to the southward, until the northern army had joined him. Every circumstance forbade it. He certainly knew the numbers and strength of the northern army, and the difficulties it had to encounter:—That it was to pass through a country filled with mountains and strong defiles:—That it would meet with the collected force of the province of New-York, and the four Eastern Colonies:—That these were by far the most disaffected to Government:—That their Militia were more numerous, more easily collected, and better trained than any others in America. And yet we find him passing to the Southward, three hundred miles from Albany, into a country which was the best affected to Government, and of course the least capable of opposition, with an army of double the number of troops which composed that under General Burgoyne,

Burgoyne, and thereby putting it out of his power to support or relieve that army with which it was intended he should co-operate. If near 20,000 men, assisted by the British fleet, were necessary to carry on the operations in Pennsylvania, a country which he acknowledges to be in general well affected to Government, he must certainly know, that one-third of that number were not sufficient to oppose the united force of the five most disaffected of all the revolted Colonies, and consequently, that it was his duty to co-operate with and support it; and that he could not have taken a more effectual step to sacrifice the Northern army, than that of carrying his whole force to the Southward, without leaving even a corps sufficient to make a diversion in its favour. The necessity of this diversion on the coasts of New England with 2000 troops, was obvious to every man of sense (*p*).—It would have prevented in a great measure the militia in that part of the country from joining Gates, and beyond all doubt it would have enabled General Burgoyne to have opposed with success the force with which he had to cope.

(*p*) Vide Lord George Germaine's Letter of the 3d of March 1777, recommending this measure in the strongest terms.

But

But if we even suppose that the expedition to Pennsylvania was an eligible measure, why was it not prosecuted agreeably to his first plan, by marching his army through the Jerseys, and sending the fleet up the Delaware? There was nothing to prevent it.—Pontoons were built, and the flat-bottomed boats prepared and put on carriages to pass the Delaware; and that river is fordable in many places from the month of June to October, with very little interruptions by rains.—Why was so high-spirited an army taken from the sight of an enemy of not half its force, put on board a fleet, and exposed to all the accidents and dangers of the ocean; to go by water 600 miles to a place, which was not 60 miles distant by land from the spot whence they marched to embark, and at a season of the year when he knew the South-west winds would, in all probability, oppose every mile of his passage? And why, when Philadelphia was his object, after he had experienced the opposition of the trade wind, did he obstinately persist in his circuitous route, when he knew, or ought to have known, that neither a sufficient provision of water or food had been made for his cavalry?

I will not dwell too particularly on the blunders of his general plans, but hasten to remarks

marks on their execution, which will shew that they were founded in ignorance and folly, or in something worse, and that they were better calculated to delay the operations of the war, to give time for a panic-struck enemy to recover their spirits, and to recruit their enfeebled and vanquished force, than to suppress the rebellion.

The operations on Long Island, New York, the White Plains, and in the march from thence to Brunswic, have been so well explained, that I shall not enter into a particular description of *them*. I shall content myself with reminding your Lordship, that such was the superior force of the British army, it met with no difficulty in defeating the enemy in every battle. And yet in them all, the British Commander suffered his enemy to escape without pursuit. In the midst of victory, the ardour of his troops was suppressed, and the chace forbid. This fact is as true as it is singular, and ought to be remembered. Indeed it cannot well be forgot, as every operation mentioned in the course of this narrative will remind us of it. How far it was justifiable, military skill will determine, when it is known, that the rebel army was merely a new raised undisciplined corps, which a victory and vigorous pursuit never yet failed to destroy, or finally disperse.

At

At Brunswic, in December 1776, Lord Cornwallis was upon the heels of the enemy.—The destruction of a bridge over the Rariton saved them,—only for a few hours;—their further security was owing to the orders received by that Nobleman to halt at Brunswic. The Rariton is fordable at that place, in every recess of the tide;—and had the noble General been left to act at his own discretion, he might, and no doubt would, have pursued his enfeebled and panic-struck enemy to the Delaware, over which they never could have passed, without falling into his hands.

At Brunswic, the British army halted near a week. Washington's, consisting of 3000 men, lay at Prince Town, seventeen miles,—and at Trentown on the Delaware, twenty-nine miles distant, with all his heavy cannon and baggage.—Many persons were astonished at his temerity, in remaining a week so near the superior force of the British army, with a large river in his rear to cross;—and some of his own officers censured his folly to his face (*q*). But he,

(*q*) At this time, General Weedon, sensible that the rebel army was liable to be destroyed, by proper exertions, before it could cross the Delaware, wrote to his friend at Fredericksburg, * that General Howe had a mortgage on the rebel army for some time, but had not yet foreclosed it.

on

on this, as on every other occasion, relied on the indolent progress of the British army, and waited its nearer approach. On the 7th of December, the army marched from Brunswick at four o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Prince Town in the afternoon about the same hour. Washington in person, with Stirling's brigade, left that place not one hour before its arrival. At twelve o'clock at night, he began to embark his heavy baggage and artillery, and did not finish passing his army over the river till three o'clock in the afternoon. Never was there a fairer opportunity of gaining a final victory, given by one enemy to another, than the one now offered by the Rebel to the British General, who might by a forced march of 3 or 4000 men, have overtaken and destroyed the small panic-struck remains of the Rebel force, with all their baggage and artillery. But he despised a conduct so unfair and ungenerous against a defeated enemy. He waited at Prince Town seventeen hours, marched at nine o'clock on the morning of the eighth, and arrived at Trenton at four o'clock in the afternoon, when the last boat of the rebel embarkation crossed the river; thus he took seven hours to march twelve short miles, calculating with great accuracy, the exact time necessary for his enemy to escape.

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At

At this time, the panic arising from the several defeats of the rebel force at Long Island, New York, the White Plains, and the progress of the army through New Jersey, had extended itself from the military to all the civil departments of the New States, and particularly in the Middle Colonies. The Governor, Council, Assembly, and Magistracy of New Jersey, had deserted the province. The rebel State in Philadelphia had dispersed, and the Congress themselves giving up all as lost, fled with great precipitation into Maryland. General Mifflin, and others, attempted in vain to raise the militia of Pennsylvania. Three of the principal citizens of Philadelphia, in behalf of the rest, waited on Congress before their flight, and boldly informed them, that they intended to meet Sir William Howe, and implore his protection—to which the Congress did not object. And all the Middle Colonies were ready to submit; the loyalists from principle, and the rebels, from an opinion that the British troops, hitherto victorious, were invincible. Hannibal had not so certain an opportunity of reducing Rome, as the British General had at this time of effectually suppressing the rebellion by crossing the Delaware. Every one expected, that he would pass that river, as it is so easily practicable, and as it must have been followed by the greatest advantages. Boats, pontoons,

pontoons, or rafts, might have been built in a few days; and the Delaware crossed in a variety of places;—the country was full of provisions, which the inhabitants were ready to supply;—and nothing could be wanting to render the quarters of the British troops much more comfortable at Lancaster, Reading, or Philadelphia, than they could possibly be at New York or in Jersey; but this great opportunity of giving a fatal blow to the rebellion was neglected, without the least apparent necessity or reason.

The General having resolved not to cross the Delaware, began to form his winter cantonments. In this instance, he discovered no more military judgment than he had shewn vigor in pursuing his enemy. He scattered and extended them from Burlington to New York, a space of almost ninety miles; dividing his force into small distant parties, liable to be cut off by the enemy, one after another, with ease. But this was not the most censurable part of his conduct: the frontier posts, or those nearest to the enemy, were committed to the command of foreigners, who could not understand the language of the country. One of them left at Trent-town, the most important post in the whole line of cantonments, was brave, but totally unfit for his station. He was obstinate, passionate,

and incessantly intoxicated with strong liquors. The other at Bordentown, was equally brave, and a good soldier, but unacquainted with the people of the country and their characters, and of course liable to be deceived in his intelligence. These posts, though lying within sight of the enemy, having only the Delaware between them, were the weakest (r) in respect to the number of troops in the whole line of cantonments. The post at Trentown, opposite to which Washington lay with the main body of his army, and with boats prepared to cross the Delaware at his pleasure, was commanded by Colonel Raile, with 1200 Hessians only to defend it; and those of Bordentown, White Horse, and Burlington, with only 2000 under Colonel de Donop. In this weak state, the frontier posts, the posts of most danger, were left by the Commander in Chief; while, to the surprise of every man of common reflection, the other posts were made stronger and stronger, as their distance from the enemy, and consequently their danger, decreased. But what was yet more astonishing, because more inconsistent, if pos-

(r) The four frontier cantonments at Trentown, Bordentown, the White Horse, and Burlington, were left to the command of two Colonels. The post at Prince Town, under a Brigadier General; those at Brunswick and Amboy under two Major Generals—and the one at New York under the Commander in Chief.

sible,

sible, with military policy, these frontier cantonments, daily exposed to the attacks of the enemy, were left without a single redoubt or intrenchment to which the troops might retreat in case of a surprise or attack, until they could be relieved from the other posts.

Hitherto the British troops had carried victory wherever they passed, and the opinion that they were invincible was deeply impressed on the enemy. It was Washington's duty to take off that impression, if possible. The extent and defenceless state of the British cantonments gave him the fairest opportunity of accomplishing his wish. He therefore meditated an assault upon Trentown. But in order to draw Colonel de Donop from his post at Bordentown, and to prevent his supporting Colonel Raile at the time of the assault, he sent a corps of 450 militia, many of whom were boys picked up in Philadelphia, and the counties of Gloucester and Salem, to Mount Holly, with orders not to fight, but fly as soon as the effect of the manœuvre had taken place. The plan succeeded. Colonel de Donop marched against this insignificant part of the rebel force with his whole corps of 2000 men (eighty left at Bordentown excepted) down to Mount Holly, twelve miles from his own post, and eighteen from Trentown,

town, the post he ought to have been at hand to support. The rebel corps immediately fled and dispersed on his approach; and yet, instead of immediately returning to Bordentown to support Colonel Raile, he remained loitering two days in the neighbourhood of Burlington, without having a single enemy to oppose. Washington now saw the moment of success, and embraced it. He crossed the Delaware with 2800 men, not without meeting with great difficulties from the ice, and assaulted Trentown. Colonel Raile was surprised and unprepared, although he had received repeated information of the enemy's design, and had repulsed their advanced party on the preceding evening. He attempted in vain to form his men, who, attentive only to the plunder they had amassed, were employed in loading their waggons preparatively to their flight, and were deaf to all orders. Colonel Raile was killed, and near 1000 of his corps were taken prisoners. Success which surpassed the most sanguine hopes of the rebel Commander having thus crowned his design, he dreaded every moment the approach of the troops under General Leslie from Prince Town, or Colonel de Donop from Mount Holly, and fled with the utmost precipitation to his winter quarters on the west side of the Delaware. He had no thoughts of taking new quarters in New Jersey,

Jersey, because he did not doubt but the British Commander, with his greatly superior force, would re-occupy the important posts on the Delaware, and fortify them so strongly as to put it out of his power to retake them. This was Washington's opinion, because the measure was pointed out by common sense. It was necessary to keep alive the panic already diffused through all the colonies, and to maintain the spirits of the well affected to Government. It was necessary to the preservation of West New Jersey, so lately conquered. It was necessary to shew the enemy that British troops, although they might be surprised, yet could recover the loss sustained by that surprise. And it was practicable without danger, as the British troops were then six times superior in number, besides their superiority in military discipline and experience, to the force of the enemy.

But the Rebel Chief found himself most agreeably mistaken. Nothing was done that common sense pointed out. The policy of the British Commander was too deep to be penetrated by shallow understandings; for instead of the two nearest corps immediately marching to regain what had been so lately and foolishly lost, Colonel de Donop abandoned his post, and moved with precipitation to join

General Leslie at Prince Town, who, when they were united, though they were much superior in force to Washington, and though there was no enemy in New Jersey to molest them, waited till General Grant joined them from Brunswick. A conduct of this kind, which was attended with all the appearance of panic and dismay, could not fail to invite Washington again over the Delaware, with a view to occupy Trentown, from which post he might with ease harass the British troops in their quarters. After waiting eight days, and finding no attempt made to repossess the Banks of the Delaware, he again crossed that river, and marched to Trentown with about 4000 men. Lord Cornwallis, who had arrived at Prince Town from New York, marched against Washington, with the corps commanded by Generals Grant, Leslie, and Colonel de Donop, a force greatly superior to that under the Rebel General, and came up with him at Trentown in the evening, intending to bring on an engagement in the morning; but Washington, sensible of his inferiority, lighted up his fires about midnight, and retreated to the heights of Morris Town. This was done so suddenly, and with such precipitation, that he left behind a fourth part of his army, and a part of his baggage and cannon, which were posted about a mile from his camp. These men,

men, in the morning, searched in vain for the main body of their army, and finding themselves deserted, fled in dispersed and small parties to Burlington. Washington, in his retreat with the gros of his army, met with the 17th and 55th regiments; the first commanded by Colonel Mawhood. This gallant Officer, with his single regiment, undismayed by superior numbers, attacked, beat back the van of the enemy, and, pushing forward, cut through their army, and joined General Leslie. Washington proceeded in his march to Morris Town, and the British troops returned to Brunswic, giving up every post they possessed in West New Jersey, with that entire province.

There was something so inexplicable in all these transactions, that men of sense stood amazed at their unparalleled absurdity. They could not, upon any principle of reason, account for the blunders made in the injudicious cantonments of the troops, in leaving so small a force in the frontier posts, in neglecting to fortify in the least degree the posts nearest the enemy and most in danger, in placing the British, and the greater number of troops in the cantonments farthest from the enemy, in not retaking possession of the posts on the banks of the Delaware, as those posts secured and covered

the whole province of New Jersey, and the river formed an excellent barrier against the enemy's attacks; and finally, in not disarming the disaffected to Government, and inviting the well affected to assist in the defence of the colony. They could not conceive how it had been possible for the British Chief, at the head of near 30,000 high-spirited veteran and victorious troops, to suffer an army of Rebels, undisciplined and panic-struck, consisting of not a sixth part of his own numbers, to remain in a province he had so lately in his firm possession, much less to compel him to abandon that whole province. And when the friends to Government reflected on the pernicious consequences which must naturally attend these gross mistakes, they were struck with grief and despair: they saw that those mistakes would revive the almost extinguished spirit of the rebellion, enable the Congress to return to Philadelphia, the members of the New States of that Colony, and of the Colony of New Jersey, to resume their powers, to make further exertions to recruit the rebel force, to continue the rebellion, and, with it, the distress of their country.

The two armies being now in their winter-quarters, let us take a short view of the conduct of their Commanders. Washington saw that

that his situation demanded enterprize and exertion. He saw that they would keep his men in action, prevent desertion, raise their lost spirits, and that, by such spirited conduct, the British army would be harassed and diminished. For these reasons, although his numbers were truly contemptible, when compared with those of the British force, he always took a position near it, whence he might with ease insult, surprise, and cut off its out-posts and pickets. In this mode of war he constantly employed his men. No inclemency of weather, no difficulty deterred him. The posts at Amboy, Bonum Town, and Brunswic, were continually harassed, and in a manner besieged. The duty of the Officers and soldiers in garrison, by this measure, became as laborious and severe as when they were in the field; and many of them were cut off in those excursions which were necessary to repulse the incessant attacks of the enemy—more by far, in the opinion of many able officers, than would have been lost in an attack upon Washington's whole force; which, being at this time less than 4000 undisciplined troops, might have been defeated and dispersed, without any difficulty, by a fifth part of the British army. Such was the policy of the Rebel Chief, while that of the British General formed

a perfect contrast to it. Destitute of every idea of military enterprize, he suffered his inferior enemy, during the space of six months, to remain within twenty-five miles of his headquarters without molestation; and continually to insult and distress his troops with impunity.

From December to the middle of June, while the British troops in the Jerseys remained in this disagreeable situation, the Congress and the Rebel States in every quarter were making every exertion to recruit Washington's army. But such was the disaffection of the country, that men would not enlist, and when drafted from the militia, they fled from their districts to places where they were not known, to avoid the service; and when embodied, they often deserted in whole companies before they joined the army. Until the beginning of June, Washington's numbers did not amount to eight thousand men, militia included; indeed all experience has shewn that the Rebel States could never collect their force till the middle of that month. This circumstance plainly dictated the good policy of an early campaign; but such were the mistaken notions of the British Commander, that he conceived it impossible to open the campaign till the green forage was on the ground,

ground. He either did not, or would not consider that the country was full of grain, hay, and dry forage, and that this was much to be preferred to green, which would rather scour and weaken his horses, than add to their strength; and this kind of forage he had, or might have had in his magazines, or might have procured in his march through the country, as he had done in the last campaign. However, these considerations, added to Washington's weak state, and the increase of his force, which was naturally to be expected, had no weight with him. He did not open the campaign till the 12th of June. On that day, the British General assembled his troops at Brunswick. Washington was encamped on a hill above Quibble Town, about nine miles from that place, on the north side of the Rariton, with fewer than 6000 undisciplined and badly appointed troops; which, with a corps under Sullivan, of 2000 men at Prince Town, composed his whole force. His camp was far from being inaccessible or fortified. It was strong and defensible in front, because it was guarded by the Rariton, and the hill was steep and difficult of access; but in his rear, towards the mountains, or on his right, towards the Delaware, it was by no means impracticable of assault. There were large and good roads
around

around it, leading from Brunswic, on either side of the river. In this state Washington indiscreetly remained, as if he was perfectly acquainted with the intended movements of the British army; however, whether he knew them or not, there were many circumstances that pointed them out. The British Commander marched his army, in two columns, to Middle Bush and Hillsborough, two villages lying in a low level country, perfectly overlooked by Washington, and on the south side of the Rariton, keeping that river, which was not at that time fordable, between his army and the enemy. Provisions for a few days only were taken from Brunswic. The pontoons and flat-bottomed boats were left at that place, and the fleet lay ready at Staten Island to receive the army. These circumstances plainly informed Washington that Sir William Howe did not mean to cross the Delaware, and that he was not anxious to bring on an action. Judging from these circumstances, or knowing by some other means the British General's designs, he remained at ease in his camp, contenting himself with insulting and harassing the British pickets, by his parties daily sent out for that purpose.

On the approach of the troops towards Prince Town, Sullivan fled in a panic to the Delaware,
and

and began to embark his men, but was stopped by an order from Washington, and took post at Flemingtown. In these positions the two armies remained from the 14th to the 19th of June, in which time the British General, being determined to leave some monument of his *wisdom* and *military skill* behind him, built three large redoubts, which he left undemolished, to be fortified by the enemy as their occasions might require.

In no stage of the rebellion were the affairs of the rebels in a state so critical and low as at this period. Gates's army did not amount to 5000 men, nor Washington's to 8000, militia included. Sir Guy Carleton was about to approach on the north, and Sir William Howe, with 17,000 men (s), was in the field, in sight of his contemptible enemy. The assaulting of the rebel camp, or the intercepting of its provisions, and the reducing of it by a siege; or, if Washington had by accident escaped, a vigorous pursuit after him, must have been attended with most important consequences. The fate of all the rebel magazines westward of Phi-

(s) He might have taken 24,000 men with him to attack Washington, and left 5478 for the defence of New York, as he had then under his immediate command 29,478 effectives. See Major-general Robertson's evidence before the House of Commons.

ladelphia,

Philadelphia, of the rebel posts on the North river, and the safety of the northern army were involved in these measures. Had the British army defeated or dispersed Washington's force, which either an assault or a vigorous pursuit must have effected, it would have been impracticable for the Rebel States, with all their possible exertions, to have raised another army, or even to have added to the weak force under Gates; because all experience has shewn, that, after a military disaster, or during the operations of the British troops, they have attempted in vain to recruit or reinforce their armies. The British General would have been left at pleasure to have sent a corps up the North river agreeably to his solemn engagement to General Burgoyne on the 2d April 1777 (*t*), and to have prosecuted his original design of crossing the Delaware, or to have co-operated with the northern army in reducing the New England States. Supposing, but by no means granting, that the danger of pursuing those measures had been in prospect greater than those arising from exposing his army to the perils of the ocean, and of a hot

(*t*) In his letter of this date he says, " I shall endeavour
 " to have a corps upon the lower parts of Hudson's River,
 " sufficient to open the communication for shipping through
 " the Highlands, at present obstructed by several forts erected
 " by the rebels for that purpose, which corps may afterwards
 " act in favour of the northern army."

Southern climate, yet certainly those obvious advantages would, at least, have justified the attempt.

On the 19th of June he returned to Brunswick, and on the 22d to Amboy, suffering in both marches the rear of his healthy and high-spirited army to be insulted and harassed by small parties of the rebels; and on the 30th, the troops crossed to Staten Island.

I will here, my Lord, pause for a moment in my narrative, in order to do justice to these manœuvres, which evidently surpass all military skill, if not all human understanding. We have seen the British General in the complete possession of the whole province of New Jersey, without taking a single step to embody the Loyalists, to make use of the force of the country for its defence, or to reconcile the minds of the people to his Majesty's government. We have seen him relinquishing to an enemy, of not a sixth part of his strength, all West and a great part of East New Jersey, without a single struggle to retain them; and now, we find him retreating before the same enemy, with less than one-third of his effective strength, dismantling every fortification, and evacuating every post in a province, which had already cost the nation so

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much

much blood and treasure; and these blunders he committed, that he might blunder still more egregiously, that he might put his superior army to all the inconveniencies of a sea-voyage, that he might commit them to all the dangers of the ocean, and pass, perhaps, several thousand miles to meet that enemy, whom he had as much in his power as in his view, with double their force, and on stronger ground. Surely, my Lord, every man in the nation, whose money he has wasted, has a right to demand of him satisfactory answers to the following questions. Why did he presume to alter the plan of operations approved of by the wisdom of his Majesty in Council (*u*)? Why did he make such expensive preparations for crossing the Delaware, and not make use of them? Why did he pass up on the south side of the Rariton, and take positions in

(*u*) Sir William Howe's letter 20th of January 1777. Lord George Germaine's letter 3d of March 1777. Sir William Howe's letter 2d April 1777. Never was there so great inability shewn by any Commander as is in those letters. The first proposes "to penetrate with the main body of the army by way of Jersey into Pennsylvania." The second letter contains his Majesty's approbation of this plan. The third, after assigning reasons for changing it, which never existed, proposes "to invade Pennsylvania by sea." And in a short time after, we find he had deserted both, and pursued his ill-advised scheme, of transporting his whole army round to the Chesapeake, and invading Pennsylvania through Maryland and Virginia.

which he could neither assail his enemy, nor could his enemy, however disposed to do it, assail him? Why did he not march round either on the North or South to the rear of that enemy, where he might be assaulted without any uncommon risque? Supposing that enemy so strongly posted, that it would have been imprudent to assail his camp, Why did he not, with an army vastly superior, cut off his supplies of provisions and starve him?—or cross the Delaware, and destroy all his magazines and other resources of strength? If he wished to force his enemy to an engagement, let him answer, what means were so proper, so natural, so effectual, to that end as those I have mentioned. Weak and ignorant of military knowledge as Washington may be, he could not be so far lost to all sense of his own safety, and the cause he was engaged in, as to suffer the British General to pass the Delaware, seize upon his undefended magazines, and the defenceless city of Philadelphia. Had this been attempted, he must have left his strong post, as it is called, and fought the British army, or have lost his magazines, and the capital and most important city in North America. For these he fought at Brandywine in September, and for these he must have fought in June, or lost them. Philadelphia, at this time, was altogether de-

fenceless either by land or water, and there were no troops to defend the magazines in Pennsylvania. But the British General was too honourable an enemy to take rebels at such disadvantages.

It is truly an irksome and painful task, for a liberal mind, to travel through all the misconduct of this campaign. Blunder upon blunder is incessantly rising in its view, and as they rise, they increase in magnitude. I am now arrived at one, which was the source of all our misfortunes, the Chesapeake expedition.

The motives which led the General to this fatal expedition are, as yet, and I suspect ever will be, a mystery—because, I am certain, none can be assigned which promised any advantage over his enemy, or which could possibly render his circumstances better than when he was at Hillsborough, where he had that enemy perfectly in his power, and of course where he might have extinguished the rebellion. He could not but know that this expedition would greatly delay the operations of the campaign, and render it impossible, however necessary it might be, to support the Northern army. He could not but know, that by leaving Washington in Jersey, and suffering him to insult his retreating army, great disadvantages would be incurred,

red, and that the transportation of that army several hundred miles by water, would take up much time, give the rebels new spirits, and enable them to make new exertions to increase their force, not only against the Southern but Northern army. And he perfectly well knew the difficulties and delays which he would meet with in his voyage, because he was forewarned (*) of them. Charity, in its utmost extent, will not induce us to believe the contrary. And yet, however inconsistent this expedition was with the plain dictates of common policy, and however portentous of fatal events to the Northern army, and to the service in general, we find him determined to pursue it, though it was approved by no mortal but himself; nay, though it presumptuously superseded the plan which had the approbation of his Sovereign.

But let us more minutely state the facts, and trace the effects of this unfortunate expedition. The troops were embarked in ships on the 5th of July, where both foot and cavalry remained pent up in the hottest season of the year, in the unhealthy holds of the vessels, until the 23d,

(*) See the Examination of Joseph Galloway, Esq; published for J. Wilkie in St. Paul's Church-yard, pages 33, 34, 35.

without the least apparent cause. On that day, they sailed out of the Hooke, but meeting with contrary winds, as had been positively foretold, they did not arrive in the capes of Delaware until the 30th. Had the British General inclined to render this expedition as little injurious to the attainment of the great object of his commission as possible, he would have passed up the Delaware to Philadelphia. Every possible circumstance favoured the manœuvre. The wind was fair at South-west. Washington still believing it impossible, that he could desert the co-operation with the Northern army, remained in New-Jersey. There was not a regular troop in Pennsylvania, a few recruiting parties excepted. The fort at Mud Island was garrisoned only by 130 militia, and Billingsport with 90. The floating batteries were not manned, the lower chevaux de frize were not placed in the river. The chain was not finished; the passage from the Capes to Philadelphia was open; Red Bank was not fortified or occupied; in short, there was nothing to oppose the taking possession of Mud Island fort, the city of Philadelphia, and all the rebel water guard in Delaware. The Congress and rebel State were in the utmost panic, and preparing to fly a second time. But all these favourable circumstances could not induce the

the British General to pursue that plan which his Sovereign had approved.—He rather chose yet longer to combat the uncertainties and dangers of the ocean, than to surprise the rebels who were unprepared to receive him.—He therefore proceeded round to the Elk Ferry, where he arrived after a voyage of more than three weeks, on the 23d of August.

Here charity commands us to believe, that he began to repent of his folly, and to think that he had carried his military farce too far.—The circumstances of his army certainly were sufficient to alarm him.—His infantry had been near two months pent up in vessels, feeding on salt provisions only, and his horses were in the same situation, in a Southern climate in the hottest months in the year, feeding on pease, and for a considerable time on a short allowance of water: Many of the latter, though in the highest health and vigour when embarked, were now dead and cast into the ocean, and the rest so emaciated as to be utterly unfit for service.—His army was landed on the 25th at Elk Ferry, but it could not move.—Horses were wanting to supply the places of those that were dead, and time was necessary to recruit the flesh and spirits of those which had survived the voyage. Detained a fortnight

night by these misfortunes, which were the natural effects of this ill-advised expedition, the army did not march from Pencadder in a body until the 8th of September, when after passing through Newark, Hockeson, and New Garden, it arrived on the 10th at Kennet Square.—Washington on the 8th had marched from Wilmington to Chads-Ford, and had taken a strong post on the heights of Brandywine, on the Eastern side about six miles distant from Kennet Square.

Thus declining at the happy juncture to attack an enemy of greatly inferior force, the British General undertook this infatuated voyage. As if he had meant to give the rebel States and Congress time to recruit their enfeebled armies, he idly and wantonly wasted *twelve weeks* of that precious time which his duty to his Sovereign and his country required to be vigorously employed ;—he left his enemy, who was *in his sight* at Hillsborough, to combat all the dangers of the elements, and to go in the nearest course 600 miles, and in the course of his traverse sailing more than 2000, to meet that enemy again, posted on stronger ground and with double their former force.

Washington

Washington having now 16,000 men (y), and being strongly posted, the British General no longer thought it ungenerous or ignoble to give him battle.—Having the best intelligence of his situation, on the 11th in the morning he marched his army in two columns to the assault, the right under General Kniphausen, a truly gallant and great officer, to pass the Brandywine and attack the enemy in front, the other under Lord Cornwallis to turn his left flank. Both of these manœuvres were completely effected before Washington had any intelligence of Lord Cornwallis's movement. At four o'clock the attack was made by the column commanded by his Lordship, and although the Rebel force had taken a strong position on high commanding ground, covered with very thick woods, yet such was the ardour and impetuosity of the British troops that the enemy could not sustain it.—They soon gave way and fell back into the woods in their rear.—The British entered with them, and closely pursued towards their other column, then engaged with General Kniphausen, who was

(y) In order to obtain recruits, and to reinforce their armies, the Rebel States universally declared that Sir William Howe had left America, and that the recruits were only raised to attack New York, and drive the remaining British troops from the continent.—This assertion, however false, was covered with such a semblance of truth by the General's conduct, that it was believed by the low and ignorant, and had the effect intended.

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equally successful. A general rout took place—the Rebel army was in a manner dispersed, a considerable part of it flying with precipitation in small and confused parties by different roads towards Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Reading; while Washington, and the corps he was able to keep together, fled to Chester with his cannon and baggage.—Here he remained within eight miles of the British army till next morning, when he marched by Derby to Philadelphia. He found but few of his scattered troops arrived before him, and many never joined his corps—However, here he stayed three days, industriously collecting as many of his troops as he possibly could, and recruiting from his magazines the supplies he had lost in battle. On the third day, and not before, he assembled his troops, and marched up the North side of the Schuylkill, crossed it at the Sweeds ford, and passed to Lancaster road.—During this time the British General, as usual after every victory, with folded arms and careless indolence remained five days on the field of battle.

Never was an enemy more perfectly in the power of another, than the Rebel army had lately been in that of Sir William Howe. When the left column of the British troops had turned Washington's right flank, his whole
army

army was encompassed.—General Kniphausen and the Brandywine were in his front.—Sir William Howe with Lord Cornwallis on his right, cutting off his retreat to Philadelphia; the Delaware was in his rear, and the Christiana river on his left (z).—He was obliged to pass twenty-three miles by Chester to Philadelphia, when the British army lay within eighteen miles of that city.—A person of common abilities must have seen the policy, the necessity of pursuing a defeated enemy thus circumstanced.—Had the British General dispatched Kniphausen's column early next morning, he might with ease have intercepted Washington's corps either at the heights of Crum Creek, at Derby, or at Philadelphia, the first only nine, the second fourteen, and the third eighteen miles from the British camp; or he might with ease have passed the Schuylkill at Gray's Ferry, seventy yards over, and taken Philadelphia, with the Rebel magazines, if he had not *wisely* left his pontoons at New York as useless.—By any of these movements he must have destroyed the Rebel army; and in vain will it be assigned as a reason for his not pursuing the victory next morning, that “the troops had undergone much fatigue in a march of seventeen miles,” when it is known that General Kniphausen's column, consisting of

(z) See the Chart in the Appendix.

four Hessian battalions, two British brigades, three battalions of the 71st regiment, the Queen's American Rangers, and one squadron of the 16th Dragoons, had not marched more than six miles, and been in very little action during the battle.

We left Washington on the Lancaster road approaching towards his enemy. The British General now meditated a second battle.—The two columns of the army were on their march for that purpose—one of them began the action with the advanced guard of the enemy, and defeated it.—But what is human resolution! How easily is it diverted from its purposes by unforeseen events! A *fall of rain* prevented the intended attack.—Some men thought that the rain was in favour of disciplined troops, who would take more care of their ammunition from knowledge and experience, than undisciplined; and others were so weak as to imagine that no weather ought to prevent a superior force from attacking a shy enemy when an opportunity offered.—The British General thought otherwise.—His troops were called from the attempt, and his enemy again, by a precipitate flight, saved themselves, but lost all their small and great ammunition, besides sustaining much other damage.

As

As I mean in this narrative to avoid prolixity as much as possible, I shall pass over the marches and counter-marches of the two armies, and hasten to the operations while the troops lay at Philadelphia.—On the 26th of September, Lord Cornwallis without opposition took possession of that city, the Congress having fled to York, and all the officers of the Rebel State to Lancaster.—His entry was truly triumphant.—No Roman General ever received from the citizens of Rome greater acclamations than the noble General did on this occasion from the loyal citizens of Philadelphia.—His Lordship, ever vigilant and active in whatever was committed to his care, quartered his troops in the environs of the city, and immediately erected three batteries to defend it against any attempt from the Rebel water force. Before they were finished two Rebel frigates, a number of gondolas, gallies, and other armed vessels from Mud Island, came up and attacked the lower battery.—The Delaware frigate of 30 guns was taken, a schooner driven ashore, and the rest were obliged to return to Mud Island, without doing any damage.

The taking of Mud Island fort, and the destruction of the Rebel water guard, which effectually cut off all communication between the fleet and army, became next an object of his
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Lordship's attention. The Rebels had cut the dykes of the Province and Blackeley's Islands, and let in the water of the river to prevent the erecting of batteries against the fort.

Captain Montresor, the chief engineer, had before the rebellion surveyed Mud Island, and taken the bearings and distances of the shores on each side of the river.—He saw the absolute necessity of repairing those dykes, and stopping out the waters, before any effectual progress could be made in erecting the batteries.—A gentleman of considerable influence in the city, who was of the same opinion, offered to have these repairs effected in a few days.—This was all pointed out to the Commander in Chief, but, from what motive is unknown to this day, they were not permitted to be made. The workmen obliged to work in water and soft mud laboured in vain.—The work they performed in the reflux of the tide, the influx washed away. Thus a month was shamefully wasted, and no progress made towards taking the fort.—At length, Lord Cornwallis sent for the gentleman who had offered to repair the dykes, informed him it must be done previously to the erecting of the batteries, and requested he would undertake it.—This he did with cheerfulness, and although the breaches were as large again as when
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he first proposed the repairs, the work was finished in six days.—The batteries were immediately erected without difficulty, and opened on the 10th; and Mud Island fort, after being severely cannonaded from the batteries, the Vigilant, and other vessels of war, was evacuated on the fifteenth of November, six weeks after the British troops had been in possession of the city.

But this was not the only, or the least blunder, which retarded the success against Mud-Island fort.—On the 29th of September, at the instance of Captain Hammond, Lieutenant Colonel Stirling, with the 10th and 42d regiments, was detached from Welmington across the Delaware, to destroy the rebel works at Billingsport, which prevented the taking up the lower chevaux-de-frize.—The detachment took possession of the enemy's works, without opposition.—This post being taken, Colonel Stirling saw the necessity of forming a post at Red Bank, not yet occupied by the Rebels, because of no great consequence while they remained in possession of Billingsport;—but when they had lost that post, it became of the first importance to them.—It was the only key to Mud-Island fort—the only spot from which it could be relieved, or supplied;—without it they could not cover their water-guard, which could lie in no part of
the

the river to support the fort, but under the cannon of this post.—And had this post been taken, and occupied by British troops, the fort and water-guard would have been placed in the midst of a triangle, and constantly exposed to the cannon from posts in each angle, from Red Bank on the East, the Province Island on the West side of the Delaware, and from the men of war on the South in the river below (*a*).—Possessed of these ideas, Colonel Stirling desired permission to take possession of Red Bank ;—but it was not granted him. The Rebels, taking advantage of the blunder, immediately fortified it. And, under its cannon, they constantly covered their water-guard, which sallied out from this advantageous post, when they wished either to supply or relieve the fort, or to annoy the ships of war.—The subsistence of the British troops in Philadelphia depended so much on the surrender of this fort, that Washington exerted every nerve to preserve it.—He offered 100 l. extraordinary bounty, to every soldier who should serve in defending it during the siege :—These men were relieved every six hours from Red Bank, and therefore the defence was extremely obstinate ; the enemy sustaining a loss of near six hundred killed, which was more than the number at any time thought necessary to defend it.—From these facts we may

(*a*) See the Chart in the Appendix.

easily perceive, that by neglecting to take post at Red Bank, on the East, and by the blunder of not permitting the dykes on the West side of the Delaware to be repaired, the fort on the island, which might have been taken in a few days, held out a siege of near six weeks, which entirely prevented the more important operations against the main force of the enemy, at a season of the year the most proper for action.

These mistakes threw a gloom over the minds of the army and inhabitants.—It was apparent in the countenances of the best officers, who began to fear that the fort would not be reduced, and of course that the army could not subsist in Philadelphia during the winter. The General himself, at last, became alarmed.—He therefore detached Colonel de Donop, with three battalions of Hessian grenadiers, the regiment of Mirbach, the infantry and Chasseurs, to attack Red Bank, which was now strongly fortified, and garrisoned by eight hundred men.—An attempt was made to storm the works; the troops behaved with the greatest gallantry—they penetrated into the outer intrenchments, when Colonel de Donop and Colonel Minningerode, the first and second in command, were wounded, and several Officers, and many of the men, were killed on the spot. Colonel Linfing finding the

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inner

inner works impracticable, was obliged to give over the attempt.—Thus that post, which might have lately been taken, without the loss of a man, was now attacked in vain, with the loss of some of the most gallant Officers and best troops of the Hessian corps.

That I might pursue a regular chain of connected facts, I have omitted a very material transaction—the battle of German Town.—Washington, finding no disposition in the British General to attack him, and having received some reinforcements from Peck's Kill and Virginia, resolved to attempt a surprise on the British army.—On the 3d of October, in the night, he marched from Skippach, sixteen miles to German Town, and began the attack at four o'clock in the morning, on the 2d light infantry, supported by the 40th regiment. These brave men sustained the assault for a considerable time; but, at length, overpowered by numbers, were obliged to retire into the village—when Lieutenant Colonel Musgrave threw himself, with six companies of the 40th, into a large stone house.—This he most gallantly defended against a rebel brigade and four pieces of cannon, till he was relieved by the Generals Grey and Agnew.—Soon after the rebel forces gave way in all quarters, a heavy slaughter ensued, and a pursuit was

made, but much too short to be of effectual service;—and by no means so far as the resentment and ardour of the British troops wished it to be continued.—They were fresh, just roused from their quarters, while the rebels had sustained the fatigue of a long march, and all the distress of a painful defeat.—The pursuit, therefore, ought to have been, in all good policy, to the enemy's camp: had it extended so far, the rebel army must have been dispersed, and their baggage and artillery lost.

The enemy called this action a surprise; and I could wish, for the sake of the British General, that his own account of it did not justify their terms. He says, “at three o'clock in the morning of the fourth, the patrols discovered the enemy's approach, and *upon the communication of this intelligence*, the army was *immediately ordered under arms*.” If the General had received other previous intelligence, he has not as usual, in his letters, mentioned it; and if he had received such intelligence, he could not have been so lost to the safety of his army, as not to order it under arms till the approach of the enemy. Besides, it further appears from his own letter, that the light infantry and fortieth regiment were obliged to sustain the attack of the enemy for a

considerable time, to retire into the village, and afterwards, to defend a large stone-house with the utmost gallantry, before they could be relieved; which seems impossible, without some extraordinary neglect, and if the army had not been surprised.

Upon the march of the British army from German Town to their winter quarters in Philadelphia, Washington having received some reinforcements from Gates's army, removed his camp from Skippach to White Marsh, near to the city. Here he formed his quarters on a hill, having a valley and sandy run in front, and defended on the South and East by an ordinary abbatis of trees cut down, with their top-limbs pointed and lying outward. On these sides, the ground was strong and difficult of access, but on the North and North-west, or in the rear, extremely easy of access, and unfortified. On the 4th of December, Sir William Howe appeared to intend an attack on this encampment, and marched out his army in different columns, which took different positions, but all of them opposite to those parts of the camp where it was most difficult of approach, and in some degree fortified. —Two small skirmishes happened, in each of which the rebels employed 1000 men, who were
defeated

defeated with very little loss. Several movements were made towards the enemy's right and left, but none to get round in his rear, where he was vulnerable without risque or difficulty. If the General really intended to assault the camp, it was certainly to be made by an approach in the rear. If he meant to cut Washington off from his baggage and provisions, which lay about five miles distant, it was to be done by the same manœuvre. This was what Washington expected and dreaded, and therefore had taken every measure preparatory to flight. But the General contented himself with having offered to Washington his choice to fight or not, at his pleasure, and returned on the 8th to Philadelphia, but not without being greatly censured. Men who were perfectly acquainted with the ground of Washington's camp, the easy approach to it in its rear, the variety of good roads leading to it either on the right or left, and the great advantages which the British troops would have commanded by a movement round the camp, were astonished at his return, without effecting any good purpose, especially as it was well known, that Washington's troops were in the greatest panic and confusion, and prepared night and day for flight, during the time the British army remained in the neighbourhood.

Neither

Neither of the Generals having any keen appetite for fighting, though from very different motives, one, because he knew he could not conquer, and the other, because he feared he should conquer too soon, they went into winter quarters, Sir William Howe to Philadelphia, and Washington to the Valley Forge. Here, with indefatigable labour, he built a number of wooden huts, covered with loose straw and earth. Very uncomfortable lodgings for his men. He formed an entrenchment round his camp on the East and South. The ditch was not more than six feet in breadth, nor more than three feet deep. The mound was not four feet high, and very narrow, and easily beat down by cannon. Two redoubts were begun, but never finished—the Schuylkill was on his left, with a bridge across it. His rear, for the most part, was secured by an impassable precipice formed by the Valley Creek, leaving only a narrow passage near the Schuylkill, through which travellers pass Westward up the river. On the right, his quarters were accessible with some difficulty; but in his front, an approach might have been made on ground nearly on a level with his camp. The distance of his head quarters from Philadelphia was about twenty miles.

Here

Here Washington lay all the winter and spring, encountering difficulties which language can scarcely describe. His army labouring under bad appointments, almost in every respect. His troops, in a manner, naked in the most inclement season of the year, having no salt provisions, and little salt to eat with the fresh, often on short allowance in respect to both, rapidly wasting by sickness that raged with extreme mortality in all his different hospitals, and without any of the capital medicines to relieve them. His army was likewise diminished by constant desertions, in companies from ten to fifty persons at a time. Hence in three months, his number was reduced to less than 4000 men, who could not with propriety be called effectives.

Washington's army continued in this weak and dangerous state from December till May, while the British troops, who had the best appointments, and were in high health and spirits, lay in Philadelphia, in a great measure inactive, suffering the rebels to distress the loyal inhabitants on every side of the British lines, to destroy their mills, seize on their grain, their horses, and their cattle—imprison, whip, brand, and kill, the unhappy people who, devoted to the cause of their Sovereign, at every risque, were daily
supplying

supplying the army, navy, and loyal inhabitants within the lines, with every necessary and luxury that the country afforded.

Had the force under Washington borne any comparison with that of the British army, we should not be at a loss to account for the conduct of the British General, in suffering a weak, distressed, and yet mischievous enemy, to remain near six months so near him, unmolested. Every military man, indeed every man of common sense, who was acquainted with the different force of the two armies, and Washington's position, expected daily to see his camp assaulted or besieged, more especially in the months of March, April, and May, when the inclemency of the winter had ceased, because they knew the assault was then practicable with ease and little risk. Washington often, during this time, had not three days provisions in his camp, and sometimes not a sufficiency for one day. The Schuylkill on his left, was not passable but over the bridge. In his rear lay the Valley Creek, with the high precipice and narrow passage before described. In his front, and on his right, he was assailable on equal terms. It is difficult to determine whether these circumstances favoured most an assault or a siege. Had the General taken post with 2000 men, and fortified a commanding ground

ground on the North side of Schuylkill, near the bridge, it would have been impossible for the rebel army to have escaped on the left. Had he taken post with a like number on a similar piece of ground, opposite to the narrow passage in his rear, it would have had a like effect in that quarter. And had he detached, at the same time, 5 or 6000 men to the front and right of the camp, they would have prevented a flight on those sides, and facilitated an assault in four different places at the same moment. And such would have been the positions of the several corps of the besiegers, that they might, in case of an attack, have been immediately supported. Under these propitious circumstances, what mortals could doubt of success! But neither these, the distress of the loyal inhabitants, the millions he was wasting, the prospect of glory, nor the duty he owed to his Sovereign and the nation, could prevail on the General to desert the delusive pleasures of the long room and Faro table.

It seems impossible for a candid inquirer after truth, however painful the task, not to take a brief and collected view of the errors of this campaign. The British General had declined taking the field, because the green forage was not sufficiently grown, although the country

N produced,

produced, and his magazines were stored with, dry and better forage. He had met his enemy at Hillsborough, and though possessed of treble his strength, he would not fight him, or even distress him, by passing the Delaware and taking his magazines. He preferred wasting on his *ill advised* voyage to Chesapeak, three months of his valuable time, which, had they been wisely and vigorously employed, were more than sufficient to suppress the rebellion. He omitted to support General Burgoyne, or even to make a diversion on the coast of Massachusetts Bay in his favour, though he knew such was his Majesty's pleasure (*b*), and that either measure would have saved the northern army. And he took care not to suffer Sir Henry Clinton to perform those important services, by not leaving him sufficient force, though the rebel army, at that time, consisted of less than one third of his own effective force (*c*). And though experience had taught him, that as soon as the operations of the British army took place in the country, the people were so intimidated, that the Rebel States attempted to recruit in vain, yet, as if determined to give the Congress and New States

(*b*) Letter from Lord George Germaine, August 6, 1777.

(*c*) British force 17,000 veteran troops, rebel force 8000 new raised, undisciplined men.

opport-

opportunity and time sufficient to reinforce their armies, he pursued the very measures which Washington himself would have advised for that purpose. He relinquished his operations already begun, and hid his high-spirited army on the ocean. He declined his intended route up the Delaware, at a time when the city of Philadelphia and the fort at Mud Island were not able to oppose him ; and thus he gave the enemy full time to put the latter in the most perfect state of defence. He met Washington at Brandywine, on stronger ground, and with a force twice as great as those which he possessed at the mountain above Quibbletown, attacked, defeated, and dispersed his army ; and though that army was hemmed (*d*) in on all sides by British troops, or impassable waters, yet he would not pursue the advantage. He met the same enemy at Goshen, and began the attack, but was diverted from certain victory by a shower of rain. He declined suffering the dykes on the province and Blackeley's Islands to be repaired, though it was a work absolutely necessary to the taking of Mud Island fort. He refused to permit Colonel Stirling to take post at Red Bank, though it was the key to that fort, and without the possession of which the rebels could not have defended it a week. He supinely

(*d*) See the Chart No. III. in the Appendix.

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suffered

suffered himself to be surprised at German Town, where the valour and activity of his troops, notwithstanding the surprise, gained a victory, as honourable to *them*, as ignominious to their General, who suffered the enemy to escape without effectual pursuit, when they were languid with fatigue, and desponding from their defeat. The same General, after seeming to invite Washington to battle, at White Marsh, pursued every measure that was likely to prevent, and omitted the only one that must inevitably have brought on an engagement.

Many other instances of blunders tending to the same mischievous effects, though of less consequence, might be here added; but I have contented myself with only mentioning the most momentous to that country, which your Lordship loves, and whose interests you wish to promote, lest I should prolong the vexation and distress of mind that you must feel in the perusal of these pages. Blunders so gross—so contrary to the least degree of military knowledge, that their possibility almost exceeds the utmost extent of our belief. Blunders as fatal to this kingdom, as their cause is inexplicable. It is to them we are already indebted for the unnecessary and wanton expenditure of twenty millions—for the shameful loss of the northern army—for the
existence

existence of the rebellion at this time in America—for the alliance of France with the revolted Colonies—for the war between this kingdom and the two powerful houses of Bourbon, and for the very critical and dangerous state of the nation.

I have the honour to be, &c.

and the other in the same way
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and the other in the same way

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

EXTRACTS of the INSTRUCTIONS to
the Representatives of the different Co-
lonies in Congress, *September 1774.*

THE Delegates from New Hampshire were
instructed “to consult and adopt such mea-
“sures as may have the most likely tendency to
“extricate the Colonies from their present dif-
“ficulties, to secure and perpetuate the rights,
“liberties, and privileges, and to *restore that*
“*peace, harmony, and mutual confidence, which*
“*once happily subsisted between the Parent State*
“*and her Colonies.*”

The Delegates from Massachusset's Bay “to
“deliberate and determine upon wise and proper
“measures to be by them recommended to all
“the Colonies for the recovery and establish-
“ment of their just rights and liberties, civil
“and religious, and the *restoration of union and*
“*harmony between Great Britain and the Colo-*
“*nies, most ardently desired by all good men.*”

The

The Delegates from Rhode Island “ to meet
 “ and join with the Commissioners or Delegates
 “ from the other Colonies, in consulting upon
 “ *PROPER measures to obtain a repeal of the se-*
 “ *veral acts of the British parliament, &c.* and
 “ upon proper measures to establish the rights
 “ and liberties of the Colonies upon a just and
 “ solid foundation.”

The Delegates from Connecticut “ to con-
 “ sult and advise with the Commissioners or
 “ Committees of the several *English* Colonies in
 “ America, on *proper measures* for advancing
 “ the best good of the Colonies.”

The Delegates from New York had a ge-
 neral commission “ to attend the Congress at
 “ Philadelphia.”

The Delegates from New Jersey had the like
 general commission “ to represent the Colony
 “ of New Jersey in the General Congress.”

In Pennsylvania the House of Assembly ap-
 pointed a Committee from themselves to attend
 the Congress, and instructed them “ to consult
 “ upon the present unhappy state of the Colo-
 “ nies, and to form and adopt a plan for the
 “ purposes of obtaining redress of American
 “ grievances, ascertaining American rights upon
 “ the

“ the most solid and constitutional principles,
 “ and for *establisbing the union and harmony be-*
 “ *tween Great Britain and the Colonies, which is*
 “ *indispensably necessary to the welfare and happi-*
 “ *ness of both.*”

The Deputies from the three lower Counties were sent to the Congress “ to consult and advise with the Deputies from the other Colonies, and to determine upon all such PRUDENT and lawful measures, as may be judged most expedient for the Colonies immediately and unitedly to adopt, in order to obtain relief for an oppressed people, and the redress of our general grievances.”

The Delegates from Maryland were appointed “ to effect one general plan of conduct, operating on the *commercial connection* of the Colonies with the Mother Country.”

The Deputies from Virginia were instructed “ to consider of the most proper and effectual manner of so operating on the commercial connection of the Colonies with the Mother Country, as to procure redress for the much injured province of Massachusset’s Bay, to secure British America from the ravage and ruin of arbitrary taxes, and *speedily to procure*

“ *the return of that harmony and union so beneficial to the whole nation, and so ardently desired by all British America.*”

The Delegates from South Carolina were charged “ to concert, agree to, and effectually
“ prosecute such *legal measures*, as in the opinion of the said Deputies, and of the Deputies so to be assembled, shall be most likely
“ to obtain a *repeal of the said Acts*, and a *Redress of those Grievances.*”

The Deputies from North Carolina were authorized “ to deliberate upon the present state
“ of British America, and to take such measures
“ as they may *deem prudent* to effect the purpose of describing with certainty the rights of
“ Americans, repairing the breach made in those rights, and for guarding them in future
“ from any such violations done under the
“ sanction of public authority.”

No. II.

A

V I E W

O F T H E

BRITISH and REBEL Force operating in
the Middle Colonies in the Years 1776,
1777, and 1778.

Dates.	British troops.	Rebel troops.	Superiority of British troops.
1776.			
August,	24,000	16,000	8,000
November,	26,900	4,500	22,400
December,	27,700	3,300	24,400

To account for the rapid diminution of the Rebel force, it is only necessary to have recourse to Sir William Howe's letters of the 3d and 21st of September, and 30th of October; from which we shall find that the Rebel loss in battle, between the 27th of August and the 16th of November, exclusive of that occasioned by sickness and desertion, amounted to 7,279 men;

and that the British did not exceed 511 killed, wounded, and taken prisoners.

Dates.	British troops.	Rebel troops.	Superiority of British troops.
1777.			
March,	27,000	4,500	22,500
June, }			
July, }	30,000	8,000	22,000
September,	30,000	16,000	14,000
December,	30,000	10,500	19,500
1778.			
February, }			
March, }	29,500	4,500	25,000
April, }			
June,	29,500	6,000 in Pennsylvania, 2,500 { under Gates in Connecticut.	
		8,500	21,000

In this comparative view of the British and Rebel force, the troops in Canada, Nova Scotia, Rhode Island, and St. Augustine, are not included. And it is a comparison only of the apparent, not the real force of the two parties. Effective military strength does not consist so much in numbers, as in discipline and appointments. The former, without the latter, rather weakens than adds power to an army. It begets confusion, and that produces panic and defeat. When this is considered, the comparison of the

two armies is that of a mountain with a mouse. In every instance, the vast superiority of the British in discipline, experience, and appointments, has been manifest. At Prince Town, a single regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mawhood, opposed and cut their way through the greater part of Washington's army. At Pencader, the Hessian and Anspach Chasseurs, and second battalion of light infantry, consisting of 450 men, fell in with 1000 of the best disciplined of the Rebel troops, *advantageously posted in the woods*, whom they defeated with the loss of two officers wounded, three men killed, and nineteen wounded, when that of the enemy was not less than five officers and forty-five men killed, and 148 wounded. And in the retreat of the British troops from Philadelphia to New York, less than 2000 repulsed and defeated 5800, a chosen corps of Rebel troops.

In the account of the Rebel force, all the militia whom the Rebel States could prevail on to join their army, are included.

F I N I S.



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